



Morning Alert - Thursday, June 14, 2018

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HEADLINES

Morning news

NHK led with a report that the GOJ has decided to draw up measures to prevent incidents of child abuse after a 5-year-old girl died in Tokyo after being abused by her parents. TV Asahi gave top play to a report on the apparent gap between the U.S. and North Korea over the process of denuclearization. TBS led with an interview with former Japanese abductee Kaoru Hasuike, who said now is the time to resolve the abduction issue. NTV and Fuji TV led with reports on the arrest yesterday of two men in connection with the death of a 29-year-old nurse in Shizuoka.

Top stories in national dailies included reports on President Trump's intention to suspend military drills with South Korea while the U.S. and North Korea are engaged in dialogue (Asahi); North Korea's call for "step-by-step" actions for denuclearization (Mainichi); apparent preparations for a Japan-DPRK summit (Yomiuri, Sankei); and a rise in China's trademark applications in foreign countries (Nikkei).

AMBASSADOR

Ambassador Hagerty comments on U.S.-DPRK summit

NTV's "news every" aired on Wednesday its exclusive interview with Ambassador Hagerty conducted in Tokyo earlier in the day. The Ambassador was quoted as saying: "We witnessed a major diplomatic leap forward at yesterday's meeting.... "The President began to establish a working relationship not only leader to leader but having our teams together in the same rooms. That creates an environment for success." As for President Trump's plan to discontinue U.S.-ROK joint drills, the Ambassador reportedly stressed that it would be a temporary suspension by saying: "He felt that the environment was best to achieve progress if we were to put a pause on the actual war games that

take place.”

NTV also aired the interview early this morning, showing the Ambassador saying: “[the President] also established a working relationship. That working relationship is going to be critical as our team works with the North Korean team to move forward quickly to make progress toward complete, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization. To be clear, the sanctions will remain in place until that happens.” On the abduction issue, the Ambassador said: “I’m very pleased that the President brought this up with Kim Jong Un in their meeting. We will continue to put pressure on the situation until those abductees rightfully return home. The prime minister always brings this issue up with the President, and I’m sure he will work very hard with Kim Jong Un at some point to negotiate directly for the return of the abductees.” The network added that the Ambassador pointed out that Japan and South Korea will play an important role in the denuclearization process and economic assistance.

INTERNATIONAL

Secretary Pompeo expects denuclearization within 2.5 years

Yomiuri and Nikkei wrote that according to a Reuters story, Secretary of State Pompeo told reporters in Seoul on Wednesday that he expects that the complete denuclearization of North Korea will be achieved within two and a half years. Yomiuri said this means that the United States intends to call on North Korea to take steps toward denuclearization before President Trump’s first term ends in January 2021.

In a related development, Nikkei wrote that the United States, Japan, and South Korea will begin coordinating their policies to achieve the denuclearization of the DPRK following the U.S.-DPRK summit in Singapore at a trilateral foreign ministerial meeting in Seoul today.

Abe eyes summit with Kim Jong Un in August or September

Yomiuri led with a report claiming that it has learned from multiple GOJ sources that Japanese and North Korean officials have held several secret meetings since the spring to explore the possibility of arranging a summit between Prime Minister Abe and DPRK leader Kim Jong Un. The paper speculated that the two nations are discussing such ideas as Abe visiting Pyongyang in August and the two leaders meeting on the sidelines of an international conference to be held in Vladivostok in mid-September.

In a related story, Sankei led with a report claiming that it has learned from multiple GOJ sources that Kim Jong Un told President Trump at their summit in Singapore that he is willing to meet with Prime Minister Abe.

Japan increasingly worried about possible reduction of U.S. troops in South Korea

Asahi wrote in an analytical piece that the GOJ is busy collecting information about President Trump's intention to suspend joint military drills with the ROK and to reduce the U.S. troops deployed to South Korea in the future. The GOJ is reportedly concerned that the security environment in the Asia-Pacific would change if the U.S. military presence is reduced and China increased its influence in the region. The paper speculated that there would be a major impact on Japan if the United States moved forward with a major reduction or withdrawal of its troops from South Korea as a result of progress in its talks with North Korea. The paper quoted an unnamed senior MOFA official as saying that the military balance in the Asia-Pacific would change if China moved its troops deployed for a possible contingency in North Korea to other locations. The paper added that in the event of a troop drawdown in South Korea, there may be growing calls for additional troop reductions in Okinawa.

DPRK reiterates need for “phased and synchronous” approach to denuclearization

Mainichi led with an article saying that North Korea's state-run Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported on Wednesday that the leaders of the United States and the DPRK agreed on the need for abiding by the principle of “phased and synchronous” measures. The paper wrote that the DPRK revealed its interpretation that the United States has agreed to a “step-by-step” approach to denuclearization, quoting the KCNA report as saying: “Kim Jong Un told President Trump at their summit in Singapore on June 12 that if the U.S. side takes genuine measures for building trust in order to improve its relationship with North Korea, the DPRK can take commensurate additional good-will measures at the next stage.” The paper speculated that future talks between the United States and the DPRK may run into difficulties because differences have emerged between the two nations over their approach to denuclearization. Yomiuri and Sankei ran similar reports.

Kim Jong Un reportedly did not say abductions have been resolved in talks with President Trump

Asahi, Mainichi, and Nikkei wrote that LDP Deputy Secretary General Hagiuda told reporters on Wednesday that he learned from Prime Minister Abe that Kim Jong Un did not repeat North Korea's claim that the abduction issue has already been resolved during his talks with President Trump in Singapore.

CCS Suga says IAEA inspections must come before financial support for DPRK denuclearization

Wednesday evening's Asahi and Yomiuri wrote that concerning President Trump's intention to have Japan and South Korea shoulder the cost of North Korea's denuclearization, Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga told the press on Wednesday that Japan is prepared to shoulder the initial costs when the denuclearization process moves forward and the IAEA resumes its inspections in the DPRK. Asahi interpreted this remark to mean that Suga reiterated Japan's position that Pyongyang's acceptance of IAEA inspectors is a prerequisite for providing financial support.

